Life Skills (PSHE)

intent, implementation, impact

intent

Academic: At St Michael's, we want every child to achieve their academic potential. We recognise that children have different starting points and experiences, so Life Skills is taught in dedicated lessons and reinforced across the wider curriculum.

Pupils learn about physical and mental health and build a toolkit of strategies to manage their emotions, recognise self-doubt and develop the confidence to take on challenges. In September, pupils set goals and break them into manageable steps. In July, they reflect on their progress and look ahead. Year 6 pupils use this opportunity to think about their transition to secondary school and their hopes for the future.

We teach pupils to build respectful relationships at home, at school and in the wider community. They learn to work with others, express their views clearly and disagree constructively. In Celebrating Differences, Year 3 pupils learn to recognise how conflict makes them feel and practise ways to resolve it or ask for help. By Year 6, pupils consider how differences can lead to conflict or be celebrated, and learn to respond with empathy.

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Character: We help pupils see how they can contribute to their school and wider community. They explore how their choices affect others, celebrate similarities and differences, and learn to work towards shared goals.
Life Skills lessons give pupils practical opportunities to develop moral and spiritual values. In Year 4, pupils consider how one person's actions can affect others. In Year 5, they design an anti-racism campaign and create a board game offering advice about bullying. In Year 6, the Emotional Well activity helps pupils explore how positive feelings can support their own wellbeing and that of others.
We also give pupils opportunities to share their achievements and perform for familiar and unfamiliar audiences, building confidence and a sense of self-worth

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Behaviour: Life Skills helps pupils practise the behaviours we expect across school life, including respect, consideration, cooperation and managing conflict. We revisit these themes throughout the year. In Year 6, for example, pupils discuss a bullying scenario that leads to fire damage at a school and consider the consequences for the wider community.

Each Life Skills lesson begins with a short moment of mindful reflection. Pupils practise breathing techniques that help them settle for learning and that they can use beyond the classroom. Assemblies reinforce safe choices in everyday life, including around electricity, railways and water.

implementation

At St Michael's, we teach Life Skills through dedicated lessons using the Jigsaw PSHE scheme across Key Stage 2. The curriculum is organised around six themes: Being Me in My World, Celebrating Difference, Dreams and Goals, Healthy Me, Relationships and Changing Me. Pupils revisit these themes each year, building on what they already know as they explore more complex ideas about relationships, health, wellbeing and growing up.

Teachers use the Jigsaw plans to guide what pupils learn in each year group. They adapt activities, examples and discussions to suit pupils' ages, starting points and needs while covering the planned learning. Lessons build on our school values and give pupils time to reflect, ask questions and practise skills they can use beyond the classroom. Each lesson begins with a short moment of mindful reflection.

Relationships and Health Education are taught through Life Skills. Pupils learn about respectful relationships, physical and mental health, and the changes they can expect as they grow up. Staff draw on professional development to teach sensitive topics, including puberty, confidently and in an age-appropriate way.

Consultation with families, pupils and staff helped shape our curriculum. Families shared their priorities for health education, pupils raised questions about growing up, and year-group teams identified areas where children needed more support. We use these insights alongside what teachers know about their current classes to decide where pupils need more time, explanation or practice.

impact

At St Michael's, we use formative assessment to find out what pupils understand in Life Skills and how they would apply it in everyday situations. Teachers use questions, discussion and practical activities to check pupils' understanding of the learning objectives. For example, a pupil might explain how they would resolve a disagreement, who they could turn to for help or which strategy might help them manage a strong feeling.

Pupils can show what they know through spoken explanations, contributions to group discussions and practical responses, as well as through written work. This gives pupils different ways to demonstrate their understanding. Teachers use their responses to identify misconceptions and decide when to revisit an idea, explain it in a different way or give pupils more opportunities to practise.

Each class keeps a shared floor book that brings together learning objectives, examples of pupils' responses and evidence from lessons. Teachers and pupils use it to revisit earlier learning and make connections between topics. For example, pupils might draw on strategies they learned about managing emotions when discussing how to respond to conflict.

The subject leader reviews floor books alongside group discussions with pupils. These conversations help the subject leader see what pupils remember, how they explain their thinking and whether they can apply their learning to a new situation. This helps identify what is working well across the school and where pupils would benefit from further teaching or practice.